

THE SATURDAY
EVENING

POST

FOUNDED BY

Benjamin Franklin

STEWART ALSOP
WASHINGTON EDITOR

1000 SIXTEENTH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON 6, D.C.
NATIONAL 8-2152

Fishers Island,
August 25th, 1965

Dear Arthur;

Thanks for sending me your version of the row over the eyeball-to-eyeball piece. You're the first person ever to ask me for my version of the matter which, in view of the reams which were written about it at the time, seems to me an interesting commentary on ^{my} ~~my~~ profession. Your version is not the whole story of the episode--- that will have to await the Alsop memoirs (Vol. III, INTO THE SUNSET). After E. Sorensen's version appeared, I was tempted to write a one-pager about the business, but Charlie Bartlett dissuaded me. I'm still tempted, though, to note that we made an error of omission on the piece. We had listed Sorensen, correctly, among the doves. We then learned that ~~there was a~~ the White House would be happier if Sorensen's name were omitted, since the fact that he had been a conscientious objector during the war had recently come to light, and had made a stir. So, no doubt wrongly, we took his name out of the list of doves. *Viva Culpa.*

Three points I'd like to make. I don't have the piece with me, but I am sure that it specifically mentions ^{Steven's} ~~that Steven's~~ proposal to trade in Guantanamo. You do not ~~mention this~~ mention this in your summary of what we wrote, on page 1203. It was this proposal, ~~which particularly~~ which particularly enraged ~~the~~ Steven's "non-admirers." Their reaction still seems to me understandable--- surely to reward Khrushchev and Castro for their Cuban missile adventure by abandoning our ~~major~~ Guantanamo base would have set ~~an extremely~~ a precedent very inviting for the Communists and very dangerous

for our side.

Point two. In the heart of this section, there is a sentence in our piece to the effect that Stevenson would have traded in the Guantanamo and foreign bases "only after" the Cuban missiles had been neutralized. It was said at the time that Charlie and I never bothered to get Stevenson's version of events. In fact, we consulted three times with Clayton Fritchae (neither of us had more than a nodding acquaintance with Stevenson). Clayton, for reasons still a bit mysterious to me, put great emphasis on the fact that Stevenson would have abandoned Guantanamo and the foreign missile bases "only after" the Soviets had withdrawn their Cuban missiles. ~~in~~ When we wrote the final draft, I called Clayton, read him the pertinent sentence, and asked him if it fairly represented ~~the~~ Stevenson's position. He said it did, and the sentence appeared verbatim in the text.

Point three. We were told at the time--- and I see nothing in your text to contradict it--- that only Stevenson seriously proposed using both the Guantanamo base and the foreign missile bases as trading counters to get the Soviet missiles out of Cuba. Surely therefore he proposed a course ^{which amounted} ~~exactly~~ *to a radical dissent* different from that approved by the Excom Consensus.

The layout, as you say, which I had not seen before publication, made the piece seem more sensational than it was--- I imagine you've occasionally suffered from the over-eagerness of the editors. But of course Charlie's ^{real} relationship to the President was the ~~reason~~ reason for the ~~xxx~~ row, which I confess amazed me.

Best,
Stew